

Honorable members of the Environmental Committee.

My name is Mirza Akhtar, I am long time and a proud resident of this beautiful State. Today I stand before you to respectfully request you to reject a bill that has been presented before you by DEEP(SB 375). On March 7th DEEP stated in a press release that " State Government can no longer afford to pay millions of dollars a year- much of it to multinational corporations for the cleanup of fuel discharges at private businesses". We all need to have a clarification before the legislature take any action as the statement by DEEP is misleading.

I own and represent a small business, I am trying my best and hardest to live The American Dream. I am not WALMART of the gas station industry nor am I a huge multinational corporation, to these GIANTS this bill might not effect as much, as probably they can afford these cleanups, or if they do not like to spend for these cleanups they might consider selling these properties to entrepreneurs and small businesses like mine in the State of CT, which some of these GIANTS have done already, and still make astronomical quarterly earnings from Gasoline sales.

Honorable members, in 1980's private insurance stopped covering the commercial USTs, where as Federal law requires us to, which left all the gas stations in the State out of compliance with federal law. This is why the Tank program was desperately needed to replace the insurance that we could get no longer.

Honorable members, DEEP further stated that it wants to transition this taxpayer funded program and wants to put this burden on private industry i.e. small gas station owners like me which we cannot bare, I can tell you that my company is the tax payer in this case. When this program started , one third of the petroleum gross earning tax (GET) was dedicated to for tank cleanups. It is known as "OIL COMPANY TAX". We are the tax payers who pay for this tax and DEEP wants to take it away from us, leaving us without insurance that we desperately need to keep our environment clean for us and our for our coming generations.

DEEP owes \$100 million to the tank owners and wants to pay only 20 cents on the dollar over several years, on top of all that even after 80% reduction DEEP wants to close this program and leave us without insurance coverage.

We complied with all Federal and State laws, we kept our environment cleaned and now they want to penalize us for doing that. It is very crucial for us to have Tank program in place, otherwise we can foresee many individually owned gas station being shut hence leaving us and our employees UNEMPLOYED.

As a resident of this State I urge and request you all to reject SB 375.